Interactive Internet Mapping Advisory Committee

11/1/01 Recommendation to GIS Steering Committee - Larry K. Zink

Structural Recommendation from Interactive Internet Mapping Advisory Committee:
A State of Nebraska spatial data access and support center *(GIS portal)* should be established to facilitate efficient access to and sharing of Nebraska-related geospatial data and to provide appropriate technical support to assist the multiple users of this data in state, local, and federal agencies, the private sector and the general public.

Potential role(s) of a Nebraska spatial data access and support center: *(a range of related service options, some of which could be initially incorporated into such a center, others potentially developed later as policy makers deem appropriate and resources become available, and some possibly not at all)*

a. Maintain a central geospatial clearinghouse with catalog search engines to identify the wide range of Nebraska-related geospatial data that is currently available, standardized documentation on the specific databases, and information on how the data might be accessed.
b. Maintain a central repository and online access point for a broad cross-section of Nebraska-related geospatial databases, either by direct download, links through interactive Internet map server technology, or a variety of offline digital transfer media.
c. Provide users with a single contact point to obtain the most recent versions of a variety of dynamic geospatial databases and the agencies responsible for maintaining these dynamic geospatial databases with a single point of contact with these data users.
d. Free up personnel in data producing agencies from responding to common day-to-day questions and requests related to geospatial databases by fielding many of these inquiries at the data access and support center level.
e. Provide agencies wishing to develop and maintain their own internal Internet mapping capabilities with a convenient one-stop online interactive access point for widely-used (particularly large and/or dynamic) data files, to allow them to access these files through their internet map services, without requiring them to maintain separate copies of these large and/or dynamic files on their internal agency servers.
f. Provide a variety of state and local agencies with capability of distributing information using interactive Internet mapping service technologies without the necessity of acquiring the specialized hardware and software, and developing and maintaining the specialized technical expertise.
g. Offer the potential of a one-stop GIS portal for accessing state data via Internet mapping services.
h. Assist a variety of agencies to explore the potential of, and develop and maintain a range of interactive Internet mapping applications in support of their agency missions by providing a convenient and knowledge service center.
i. Provide state and local public agencies with outreach and education related to GIS implementation.

Practical implementation considerations for a proposed "Nebraska DASC":
Given the current State budget situation, it is unlikely that the resources will be available for direct appropriations to support the development of a "Nebraska DASC", even if a solid case was made in terms of its long-term efficiency. However, over the next few years, it is very likely that several agencies will expend significant resources, in this general area, that could potentially be used to help support the evolutionary development of such a common data center. To facilitate such a process, it would be important to have the policy decisions made in advance, which support the development of such a center and which provide a rough outline of where and how it should be structured. Outlined below are some of the rough steps the might be taken to facilitate the evolutionary develop of such a "Nebraska DASC".

a. Outline business case for and secure key agency support for the development of a "Nebraska DASC"

b. Make policy recommendations in support of developing a "Nebraska DASC".
c. Define relationships of "Nebraska DASC" to Nebraska GIS Steering Committee and other information technology coordination entities.
d. A "Nebraska DASC" would interface with and support, overlap, and/or replace existing efforts to provide online access to Nebraska-related geospatial data (NDNR Databank, CSD-UNL, CALMIT-UNL, NDOR, NGPC, NDEduc, NLeg, NOL) and these relationship would need to be explored and defined.
e. Study and make decision on optional institutional location and structure.
f. Secure policy decisions in support of developing a "Nebraska DASC".
g. Outline step-by-step center development plan, including likely resource requirements and sources, and identify potential opportunities for supporting center development via related emerging initiatives or projects.
h. Take advantage of emerging geospatial initiatives or project opportunities to incrementally support and develop a "Nebraska DASC" center.

Problem - Needs Statement Related to Draft Structural Recommendation:

I. Most early GIS applications related primarily on internal agency data that was combined with a few, relatively static, geospatial databases that were copied from other entities and stored on internal agency computer systems. As a consequence these decentralized, independent agency-specific GIS systems worked fairly well.
II. Today, many GIS applications utilize numerous geospatial datasets, many of which are developed and maintained by other agencies. The large size (DOQs) and/or dynamic nature (property parcels) of some of these datasets make it increasingly inefficient to continue to develop a system based on maintaining multiple copies of these datasets on multiple agency-specific computer systems.
III. As the use of GIS in state, local and federal agencies has broadened, there is an increasing demand for these core geospatial datasets from multiple users
IV. Increased exchange of data, evolution of internet map servers to facilitate exchange, share data and applications with public
V. The State's data is distributed among a large variety of databases and data repositories, at many different network locations, and managed by many different agencies. At the same time, the mission and needs of most agencies require they use data not only from their own agency and location, but also data and information from other state agencies and network locations.
VI. …
VII. …

Connections with Other Initiatives:

- Nebraska Geospatial Data Clearinghouse enhancement
- Regional mapping centers
- Emergency management
- Property Assessment and Taxation Land Record Modernization
- One-stop data connecting point for Nebraska-related geospatial data related to I-Team development and coordination at the state, local, federal and private sector level
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